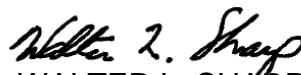




21 December 2009

2009 Holiday Season Safety

1. The holiday season is upon us. I want all of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Civilian Employees, and Family Members to enjoy this well-deserved rest and relaxation period. I encourage you to make time to reflect on and give thanks for all the blessings, freedom, and bounty we share.
2. Please remember during your celebrations with family and friends to reach out to those among us who may feel lonely and stressed. Being separated from loved ones during this joyous time can be quite challenging.
3. My number one concern during this holiday season is the safety and welfare of our USFK Team. Lessons learned from previous years indicate: we have a tendency to overindulge; vehicle accidents increase bringing pain and suffering; and alcohol abuse increases incidents during our New Year celebrations. This period can also give rise to strong emotions; domestic violence and suicidal behavior are continued areas of concern.
4. Involved leaders make a tremendous difference in how people conduct themselves. Safety awareness, discipline, and teamwork are key enablers to a safe holiday season. I want leaders to:
 - Conduct *Under the Oak Tree* counseling with their subordinates on safe and smart ways to decrease risks, avoid accidents, and how to plan activities ahead of time.
 - Identify "at risk" individuals early.
 - Develop a contract with your Service members to use the buddy system or optimally stay in Fire Teams of four or five personnel, observe the current curfew policy, and avoid off-limits areas, political gatherings, and demonstrations.
5. I want to express my thanks to all of our Service members, civilian employees and family members for the support and hard work they provide every day. Best wishes for a joy-filled Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year.
6. We Go Together!


WALTER L. SHARP
General, US Army
Commander